

Cabinet
23 MARCH 2023

Present: Councillors: Claire Vickers (Leader), Philip Circus (Deputy Leader), Paul Clarke, Tony Hogben, Liz Kitchen, Richard Landeryou and Roger Noel

Apologies: Councillors: Josh Potts and Tricia Youtan

Also Present: Tony Bevis, Ruth Fletcher, Jon Olson and Sam Raby

EX/68 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 January were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

EX/69 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

EX/70 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Claire Vickers, on behalf of Councillor Tricia Youtan, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities, announced that the Dukes Square development, which Council had approved for affordable housing, could potentially include more than the eight units agreed. This would be subject to a Cabinet decision later in the year.

Councillor Philip Circus, Cabinet Member for Recycling & Waste, made the following announcements:

- An electric hand-controlled street sweeper was to be introduced in April for use by the Street Cleansing team.
- Food waste collections: Preliminary preparations with an external consultant were scheduled to begin next week, in the light of the expected announcement from Government on mandatory food-waste collections. The modelling exercise would look at a number of options to help inform Council's decision on the frequency of collections. The Cabinet Member emphasised the positive impact these collections would have on HDC's already excellent recycling rates.

Councillor Roger Noel, on behalf of Councillor Josh Potts, Cabinet Member for Environment & Rural Affairs, made an announcement regarding the Council's current record and commitment to tackling the climate crisis. He outlined the Council's achievements and plans, and included the following points:

- HDC had already reduced its own emissions by 60%, and the draft Climate Action Strategy, to be debated at this meeting, would be critical in extending this work across the district.
- The Council's partnership with Sussex Wildlife Trust (Wilder Horsham District) continued its work to create a nature recovery network, with a number of initiatives including the River Adur restoration work, which was funded by DEFRA.
- Councillor Noel also mentioned his own support and that of Councillor Potts for the Weald to Waves project, which had also attracted cross-party support.
- HDC's Community Climate Fund had been established to help groups implement climate projects.

Councillor Liz Kitchen, on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities, announced that a new facility providing Mental Health support, advice and access to services for young people will open in May. This new service, known as iRock Horsham, would be based at the former Horsham Youth Centre. Staff, including a mental health practitioner, had already been recruited, and there would be access to drop-in sessions and specialist services.

Councillor Richard Landeryou, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, stated that the local economy was thriving, with car park use above pre-Covid levels. By way of further support, £86,000 was available for a new round of LEAP business grant funding from 3 April. Small businesses could apply for individual grants of up to £2,000.

Councillor Paul Clarke, Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets, stated that he had approved a new telephone and contact centre system contract. The existing contract was due to expire in September 2023; the new contract was with MS Teams, already widely used by the Council, and would provide these wider services at a significantly cheaper rate.

EX/71 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received.

EX/72 **DRAFT CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY FOR THE HORSHAM DISTRICT**

Councillor Roger Noel, Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture, introduced the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Rural Affairs. The Council had already made significant progress in reducing its own carbon emissions, and the strategy included actions for the whole district to become carbon neutral and climate resilient. Two consultancies had helped draft the strategy, which focussed on buildings, energy, transport, waste and land-use.

There would be three delivery routes: where the Council took a leadership role; partnerships with other organisations; and community-led action. The Cabinet Member advised that the draft would be promoted with consultations and targeted engagement over the summer, with a view to bringing a revised strategy to Cabinet later this year.

In response to concerns that the strategy was aspirational and lacked specific actions and timescales, the Cabinet Member stated that this first draft would be developed over time. The Environmental Coordination Manager advised that a number of actions had already commenced and that effective ways of working with stakeholders and businesses were being developed.

It was noted that the published draft strategy was designed as an accessible overarching document, and there was a more detailed 100-page document on which it was based. It was agreed that this detailed document would be circulated to all Councillors and made available on the Council's website.

In response to concerns regarding the level of community engagement, the Cabinet Member stated that the use of targeted engagement reflected Council's resolution on the matter (Minute No. CO/16 (d) (22.06.22) refers). Going forward, consultations with the wider community were planned to help inform the final strategy.

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the draft Climate Action Strategy for the Horsham District for promotion, consultation, and targeted engagement.
- (ii) To note that a further report to Cabinet will be produced with amendments to the Strategy as a result of the consultation and engagement process.

REASON

The draft Climate Action Strategy is an important part of the Council's response to tackling climate change. The draft Strategy provides a first step in drawing together the actions required to reduce carbon emissions and prepare for a changing climate. Wider community input and targeted engagement is required before the final Strategy is approved. This will give the Strategy greater endorsement and buy-in from the wider community and key organisations.

EX/73 **LOCALLY LISTED BUILDINGS ADOPTION**

Councillor Liz Kitchen, Cabinet Member for Planning & Development, stated that the district had many nationally listed buildings of historic interest. There were also a number of buildings without national recognition that could be formally identified as being of historical and architectural interest. The report included buildings that had been identified by local groups that warranted being listed locally.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that being on the list carried some weight in determining planning applications. She also confirmed that buildings across the district identified by local groups as of historic and architectural interest would be considered for local heritage listing in the future.

RESOLVED

- (i) To formally adopt the buildings marked as positive to conservation areas from the Conservation Area Appraisals of Storrington, Steyning, Pulborough, Henfield and Billingshurst as Locally Listed.
- (ii) To formally adopt the Steyning History Society local list alongside the buildings marked as positive to the conservation areas from the Steyning Conservation Area Appraisal.
- (iii) To formally adopt the local lists of buildings from the Neighbourhood Plans of Ashington, Nuthurst, Rusper and Southwater.

REASON

- (i) To ensure that buildings of historical and architectural significance are protected for the future.
- (ii) To recognise buildings identified as being of importance by the local community.

EX/74 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no matters currently outstanding for consideration.

EX/75 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan was noted.

EX/76 **LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND 2022-23 AND 2023-24**

Councillor Paul Clarke, Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets, reminded Members that Council had approved a Cabinet recommendation to apply for a grant allocation from the Government's scheme for local authorities to provide accommodation for those fleeing conflict in Ukraine and Afghanistan. Council had approved a capital spend to provide 16 homes by the deadline of 30 November 2023 (Minute No. CO/62 (22.02.23) refers).

The Cabinet Member confirmed the capital spend was up to £5.866m rather than the sum printed in error in the executive summary of the Cabinet report.

To facilitate speedy acquisition and efficient management of the properties, a variation of the Shareholders Agreement for the Council's affordable housing company, Horsham District Homes (Holdings) Limited, was recommended.

Councillor Tony Hogben proposed, and it was unanimously agreed by Cabinet, that recommendation (i) should also be in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets.

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the acquisition by Horsham District Council of up to 16 properties using the funds earmarked for this initiative and to give effect to the same provided that any such acquisitions are undertaken in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities and the Cabinet Member for Finance & Assets.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (ii) The variation of the Shareholders Agreement for Horsham District Homes (Holdings) Limited as follows:

Clause 3. Insert the words "*and/or to lease residential property from the Council or other third parties both*" following the words ".."and other developers" and before the words "for onward rental through" so that the business of the company reads as follows,

"The business of the Company (Business) shall be to purchase developed properties from Holdco and other developers *and/or to lease residential property from the Council or other third parties both* for onward rental through ASTs in accordance with any business plan then in force or as otherwise determined by the Council from time to time".

Reserved Matters clause 17. Insert the words ..."For the avoidance of doubt (i) material assets shall be assets of a value in excess of £250,000, and, (ii) lease arrangements between the Company and the

Council/other third parties to facilitate the provision of housing shall not constitute a reserved matter.”

so that the reserved matter reads as follows, “Agreeing to enter into or entering into any acquisition or disposal of any material assets by the company. For the avoidance of doubt, (i) material assets shall be assets of a value in excess of £250,000, and, (ii) lease arrangements between the Company and the Council/other third parties to facilitate the provision of housing shall not constitute a reserved matter.”

REASON

- (i) To ensure that suitable homes are acquired by Horsham District Council in an efficient and timely manner to give effect to this initiative.
- (ii) To avoid the requirement to seek Cabinet’s approval for the purchase by Horsham District Council of each individual property that would otherwise be required to give effect to this initiative.
- (iii) To ensure that Horsham District Homes (Holdings) Limited has the power to take a lease from Horsham District Council to be able to facilitate the provision of housing through Assured Shorthold Tenancies/Licences

EX/77 **TO CONSIDER MATTERS OF SPECIAL URGENCY**

There were no matters of special urgency to be considered.

The meeting closed at 6.24 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN